

# THE QUIVER

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"Like a hare we leapt from stone to stone."—p. 54.

## GABRIELLE OF ZERMATT.

BY THE HON. MRS. R. J. GREENE.

### PART II.—AMONG THE GLACIERS.

GABRIELLE did not return immediately to her home beneath the pines; her hasty passion was not over; the coquette fever had not cooled

down. She could not go in and sit by Heinrich's bed, while her head felt so feverish and her heart so full of pain. She must wait and seek to justify in her own mind the bitter words she had

spoken; and yet, where was this justification to be found? She walked round the brow of the hill, and sat down on a grass plateau overlooking the glacier in the valley. She knew well how Ulrich loved his mother—the feeble, complaining Marie Valpel; how, twice a day, were he ever so weary, he turned his mule's head down the glacier road, to give her with his own hands her morning and evening meal; and how even Gabrielle's love could not tempt him to let the poor blind mother spend the comfortless evening alone. She knew all this; and yet to-night, with her own lips, which ought to have spoken words of gentle sympathy, she had taunted him almost to despair—perhaps even, foolish girl, to worse.

Gabrielle, after a time, rose from the plateau and turned homewards; but her cheek was still hot, her eyes still angrily bright, when she lifted the latch and walked in.

Old Michel Macquinet was asleep: his head was drooping forward on his breast, his grey beard reaching almost to his knees; the fire-light shone red on one cheek, giving it a false appearance of freshness and youth; while star-light, cold and true, falling on the other side, painted with pale blue shadows the wrinkles of decay and time.

Heinrich was not asleep—he was sitting upright in his bed; and through the gloom and the flashing log-light Gabrielle saw tears upon his cheeks and in his eyes. Instantly the passion of the moment disappeared, and crossing the room, she laid her cheek against his caressingly.

"Heinrich, dearest Heinrich, has Gabrielle left thee too long alone? hast thou been waiting sadly for her return?"

"Nay, I have not been alone—Ulrich has been here; he sat by me for two long hours. Poor Ulrich!"

"Why dost thou call him *poor* Ulrich? He is only poor because he chooses to be so."

"Gabrielle, did he not tell thee?"

"Tell me what?" asked Gabrielle, quickly.

"Did he not tell thee poor Marie Valpel is dead?"

"Marie Valpel, his mother!"

"Yes. Ulrich went down to meet thee at the bridge, to tell thee all."

Then Gabrielle, rising suddenly to her feet, opened the chalet door, and went out. She stood on the same plateau of rock overlooking the glacier valley. All was serenely still, as a moment ago; but now she cried loudly, down into the silence and star-light—

"Ulrich! Ulrich! Ulrich come back!" "Come back," cried the distant glaciers, taking up her words. "Come back to me!" but he whom she summoned with such piercing accents to her side, gave no answer.

It was too late to go down to the valley, even

had she wished to follow him to the chalet, where Ulrich and death were keeping to-night their silent vigil. No; she must return to her home and bear for a long night, the pangs of a miserable remorse.

Slowly she went into the chalet again, and drew her spinning-wheel beside Heinrich's bed: she let its drone serve for a conversation, which she had not the heart to sustain. She could not explain to guileless Heinrich the thoughts which were causing her such pain; nor could he understand a love which could prompt Gabrielle's sweet tongue to wound, and sting, and torture—to drive almost to madness—him whom she loved the best.

That night Gabrielle slept little, for "her heart was disquieted within her." The creaking of the pines outside made her start and tremble, and she felt oppressed with a sense of solitude and distance. At midnight, she had a short dream of horror, from which she started with a cry. She had been witness in her sleep to a quarrel between man and man—a wrestle for life and death between Ulrich Valpel and Wilhelm Swartz; a struggle all the more fearful as they strove on the edge of a precipice as straight and high as the black wall of the Matterhorn. In vain, with spell-bound lips, she had striven to speak words of peace, or loosen the clasp of death; till, with a cry which shattered the delusion of her dream, she beheld Ulrich cast headlong from the height into the abyss.

Gabrielle could sleep no more. She watched by the window till the stars began to fade out of the sky, and the mountain-tops to enter their brief period of rosy sun-light; till the cows with their tinkling bells came down the pasture to the chalet door, and the goats bleated lustily outside for the hands of their mistress. Then, with a listless, sad gait, she rose and dressed for the day's work. She milked the cows and the goats, but this morning they missed her joyous song, or the handful of welcome provender. When the frugal meal was ended—when her father was seated again by the log-fire and Heinrich had been lifted to his corner in the ingle—when the cream had been gathered from the dairy and the fruit from the hill-side—Gabrielle, with face pale as the now fainting snow slopes, and eyes red with weeping, took her usual place on the rock by the way-side.

Pierre Garten came down first this morning from the inn on the summit of the hill; the mule not riderless to-day, but picking its way carefully over loose stones and red earth, till it halted, as was its custom, at Gabrielle's feet.

But Pierre was surly this morning; he struck the poor beast with his thick staff and bade it move on; he would have not looked up at her, but that Gabrielle called him, softly—

"Pierre."

Pierre Garten had a kind heart and a quick eye; he noticed at once the pale cheek and the fast-rising tears.

"Well, mademoiselle, what ails thee? how is the boy in the chalet, and thy father yonder? Neither ill, I hope?"

"No, good Pierre; but if thou couldst find it in thy heart to render me a service——"

"Ay, can I? The greater the service the greater the pleasure to me. Speak only, ma belle, and it is done."

Gabrielle hesitated. She knew her message would give pain. She was seeking for the best words to convey it.

"Pierre, if thou shouldst see Ulrich Valpel in the valley, tell him I would speak a few words with him—a few words before the evening."

Pierre's countenance fell; he looked on the ground gloomily. "Nay, nay, I did not bargain for such an errand, Mademoiselle Macquinet; I doubt that my tongue would prove a false messenger. Good morning, ma reine," and Pierre followed his mule sulkily round the corner. But Gabrielle knew Pierre's kind heart, and trusted that he would fulfil her errand.

How wearily the sun crept up this morning, each hour seeming longer and longer, as no answer came to her message. At length it seemed to stand still in the heavens above her head, while the grass scorched, and the grasshoppers sung, and the tourists swarmed round the hill-side, uttering compliments into her ears which to-day sounded foolish and fulsome.

Ulrich did not come.

Those who knew Gabrielle well, saw that to-day there was something much amiss; there were no sly glances watching them coming up the hill, or following them as they descended; no tossing of the dainty head or pouting of the lip. Subdued, unexcited, even mournfully, she sold her wares, now and then casting frightened glances towards the glacier valley.

Again, in the afternoon, she went home to the chalet, and prepared the dinner for Heinrich and her father, returning even sadder and paler.

In the evening, when the last tourist had gone up the hill, and again the stars were creeping into the primrose sky, she heard a voice calling her, and looking round, saw Pierre Garten coming over the brow of the hill, red and heated, mopping his gaunt face with his yellow handkerchief.

"Well, good Pierre, what news?"

"Yes, I am good, no doubt, mademoiselle; but my news is bad enough, as far as thou art concerned."

"How so? he has refused to come?"

Gabrielle's cheek burned with a momentary shame,

"Nay, not so fast; thy thoughts run swifter than my mule to her oats. Thou must have patience, and give me time to breathe; I have come up the hill at double speed to please thee."

"Yes, good Pierre; sit thee down and rest, but tell me only what answer gave Ulrich to my message?"

"Well, since thou wilt know the truth, there is no need to garble it. I saw *not* Ulrich Valpel. His mother is dead; the door is locked; the house is silent; and Ulrich is gone since nightfall."

"Where?" asked Gabrielle, between her white lips.

"Nay, how can I tell? They know nought in the valley, save that he stopped at Kirkman's door, by the inn, and giving him the key of his house and some money, said, should aught prevent him from returning, he desired they would give his mother a decent burial."

"Pierre, lend me thy arm," cried Gabrielle, faintly.

What an evening walk that was for poor Pierre, down the burnished slopes and beneath the pine shadows, with the mountain queen leaning like a tired child confidently upon his arm! but the pleasure was not unmingled with the acrid heartburn of jealousy. Gabrielle bid him good evening at the chalet door, with a sad humility which made his rough heart ache, but she did not invite him to enter, or rest his tired limbs by the fireside.

Heinrich saw plainly to-night that his sister was miserable. He watched tear after tear drop on her velvet bodice; but still with her foot she kept up the monotonous drone of the wheel, and he knew it was again to avoid conversation. Only once he sought to probe her grief.

"Gabrielle, hast thou seen poor Ulrich to-day? or has aught happened to grieve thee?"

Gabrielle started back from the wheel, and said, impatiently, "Heinrich, canst thou not leave me in peace?"

She had never spoken so roughly to him before, and Heinrich lay back on his pillows silently.

But at night, when the chalet was still, when her father and brother were both sleeping, Gabrielle, filled with a sudden resolution, rose from her bed, and, dressing herself, went into the empty kitchen. She hastily struck a light. She took down Michel Macquinet's hatchet from the shelf, the old guide-rope from the peg, and the lantern from the pine-wood press. For one moment she seemed to hesitate as she placed her finger on the latch; her eyes dilated in a sudden pain; she laid down the hatchet and rope, and turned towards Heinrich's room.

"Heinrich, dearest Heinrich, say good night to Gabrielle."

"Good night," answered her brother, sleepily.



"Say God bless thee, Gabrielle, and watch over thee."

"God bless thee, dear Gabrielle, and watch over thee;" and with this charm in her ears, she went out through the chalet door, and began the rapid descent towards the valley.

It was at Pierre Garten's door she stopped and knocked—Pierre Garten's chalet by the brink of the torrent. He could not hear her at first for the noise of the waters.

"Who is there?" cried the surly voice from within.

"It is Gabrielle—Gabrielle Macquinet."

A head, enveloped in a white cotton night-cap, peered for a moment through the window, and presently the door was opened.

"Gabrielle! nay, Gabrielle, *ma pauvre*, what brings thee here at this hour?"

"Pierre, listen to me, good Pierre. Thou must come with me, now at once, up the glacier. See, I have brought a rope, hatchet, and lantern. We must not delay, or we shall be late."

"Up the glacier, my angel! surely thou art but awaking from thy first dream. Wouldst thou have me lead my beautiful queen to her death?"

"Yes," cried Gabrielle, "I would go to the same death to which I led Ulrich. Pierre, if thou wilt not come at once in search of him, I go alone."

"To where—to which glacier? I know not in what direction to lead thee."

"To the snow slopes beneath the black wall of the Matterhorn."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Pierre Garten, as one would laugh at the prattle of a foolish child; "I have no regret to walk with thee a while beneath the stars, to carry thee over crevasses, to cut steps for thy pretty feet in the frozen snow, but after a while, little one, we shall turn back again."

Pierre busied himself making the necessary preparations within, and after a time, which seemed to Gabrielle a year long, they crossed the torrent together, and began the toilsome ascent.

Pierre soon found that Gabrielle was in earnest. She spoke not a word, but treasured her breath with a cautious zeal. She would answer no question, listen to no remonstrance, only follow doggedly where he led. The sky was perfectly cloudless, the stars unusually brilliant, and when they first stepped upon the snow they found it firm and hard from the sharp night frost.

Here Pierre made a valiant resistance against further progress; but Gabrielle treated him with scorn and with her own hands fastened the guide-ropes round her waist. The first faint yellow glow of morning found poor Gabrielle struggling over the moraine, still full of a faithful courage, but weak and trembling. At four o'clock, when the crest of the towering Matterhorn was bathed in ruddy flame-light, she was upon the glaciers. The

sunlit air had given her fresh vigour. She was leaping the narrow crevasses, or waiting impatiently for footsteps to be cut in the ice.

"We must be near the snow slope now," she cried, pointing to a vast white field of snow, seamed with the tracks of lately fallen avalanches. "Was it not to these Wilhelm Swartz led the English?"

"Ay; but midday will not find thee there, *ma pauvre*, nor midnight, I fear. It is impracticable; the dangers are too great. Remember, thou riskest both our lives. Think of thy father, Gabrielle; think of poor Heinrich, so young and helpless!"

Gabrielle burst into tears. "Hast thou brought me so far, Pierre Garten, only to desert me now?"

Pierre never could withstand a woman's tear. "Courage!" he cried, "courage, *ma belle*!" and again they continued their perilous way.

It was midday when they reached the foot of the snow slopes. Gabrielle was growing faint, and her courage had almost failed her, when Pierre, suddenly crying, "Halt!" pointed with his finger before him. "There, yes, there truly is the mark of Ulrich's foot in the snow; I know it as well as I know my own mule's hoof. Alive or dead, we must find him presently. He has taken, poor fool, the track to the very spot where Wilhelm made his death-climb."

"Death-climb!" gasped Gabrielle.

"Ay, surely, for death kissed him almost on the cheek. Didst thou not hear how an avalanche wind carried the very cap from Wilhelm's head, as it swept past him in his mad folly?"

"Pierre, what is that?" asked Gabrielle; in a voice so strange and terror-stricken, it made him start aside. "What is that, Pierre—up yonder, in the broken snow?"

"A rock fallen from the precipice," cried Pierre, shading his snow-blind eyes.

"Nay, but that blue thing yonder?"

"A bunch of flowers, *ma belle*. Why, Gabrielle, with thy voice and thy white face thou wilt rob me of the little strength I still possess. Thou must hasten on, wench; thou standest in the very track of the avalanche!"

But Gabrielle, hastily disentangling herself from the rope, had plunged into the crumbling snow, and down on her knees, with miserable cries for help, beside the dark mass which Pierre had called a rock, clasped to her bosom a hand, white, cold, and stiff, which held in its grasp a blue bunch of the fatal gentian.

"Ulrich! Ulrich! my beloved!"

The crest of the Matterhorn seemed to fall with a sullen blackness and roar into the glacier valley, the ground to glide from beneath her knees, the white hand to drag her down a blue abyss; but through the darkness and noise, and faintness, she heard Pierre's voice roughly kind in her ear.

"Nay, Gabrielle, my heart's love; thou must not die here in the cold snow. See! Ulrich, thy lover, still lives." \* \* \*

On the snow slopes beneath the black wall of the Matterhorn, in the presence of danger—almost of death—in the thankfulness for a great mercy

shown to her, for a great love given back to her, the last spark of the coquette nature died in Gabrielle's heart; and in Zermatt Valley, in the red chalet, among the corn-fields, there is no happier wife, no more contented husband, than Gabrielle and Ulrich Valpel.

## CROSSING THE STREAM.

**L**ONG the vista of the bygone years;  
Many shadows gloom the nigher ground;  
Yet in pointed distance aye appears  
One pure flash of radiance, rainbow-bound.

Ah! the bleak white winter of mine age  
Coldly fits this snow-enshrouded scene;  
Now like madcap will I shame the sage,  
Wildly revel in the gold and green.

Spring! thou paradise of tender joy,  
When the mirthful earth is young of life;  
Spring! the fair light love of girl and boy,  
May-buds of the bloom of man and wife.

All the earth is blushed with early morn,  
All the sky is billowed with bright fleece,  
Only westward a dim paling horn  
Mourns the flight of a more sombre peace.

All the air is mad with gusts of song,  
Myriad ariels gush sweet strains on high,  
See the lark—his flight is far and long;  
His own music wiles him to the sky.

Spring! not baby Spring, but Spring the maid,  
Like my Mary then of blithe fifteen,  
Long wild hair unbound by net or braid,  
Eyes half woman-sweet, half infant-keen,

Cheeks as ruddy as the bud that lay  
On her bosom, panting to her heart,

Mouth, where-round the merry dimples play,  
Like a red-tipped daisy scarce apart.

O that jaunt and ramble in the wood,  
When the wind went weeping to the trees;  
And the birds peured lovelays in a flood,  
Drowning the dull hum of honeyed bees.

Whimble tinkle, clinked the hurrying stream,  
Plashed and bubbled round the boulder-stones,  
Here and there glanced out a silver gleam,  
Then coursed singing on in deeper tones.

Like a hare we leapt from stone to stone,  
Then strolled slowly from the bank above;  
Soon I held her hands within my own,  
Wakened to the fair grand world of love.

Hand in hand we have gone down the path,  
Heart to heart hath ever faithful been,  
Smiling heaven of blue, dark skies of wrath,  
Season upon season, we have seen:

Spring's fair blooms that evermore unfold,  
Summer's charms that all the world engage;  
Autumn's rich ripe flush of brown and gold,  
Winter's sere old grey and white of age.

Now before us sweeps a darker stream,  
Toward that rugged bank we daily plod;  
Yet from out the flood there shines a beam,  
Bright and blessed from the face of God.

H. G. B. H.

## A WORD UPON BEING VICTIMISED.

BY THE REV. W. M. STATHAM.

**M**y friend suggests that it is better to say "Being Done;" but that is only his opinion; and, although the expression is briefer, it has not the idea in it which I want. The lexicon has it that a victim is a living being sacrificed; and that is a much broader idea than merely being deceived, or "done." A victim is just the very opposite to a victor, and it implies, as I think, that with every effort to escape the conquests of tricksters, you often get worsted or victimised in the war. At the outset, I may just remark, what a sad thing it is that we should have a state of society in which everybody has to keep such a

keen look out. What say you to this fact, ye complimenters of society in general and yourselves in particular? How comes it that, in a world you think so fair, there should be so much manifest unfairness and roguery? Now, I know what you are going to say quite well: that the demand creates the supply, and that if there were no fools there would be no rogues; that it always has been so; that people are simpletons who don't keep a starboard and a larboard watch too, all through the voyage of life, and that, as everybody knows he is in danger of being tricked, he must take his chance with the rest. For my part, I call this a vile philosophy of life, and don't believe

in it a bit. We have had many "apologies" in this world, scientific and theologic, but never, I hope, shall we get such apologies for wrong-doing as these. You cannot put a greater premium on roguery, than to make it popular by complimenting its cleverness and ignoring its iniquity: and there is, I venture to suggest, a calling bitter sweet and sweet bitter in the morals of human life. I remember hearing of an old lady who, after listening to a clergyman's discourse on moral evil, is said to have remarked that it was all new to her, for she had thought evil the most *immoral* thing in the world; so if I call this one of the worst forms of moral evil, do not let the old lady in question misunderstand me. Such, however, it is, and it is impossible for true religion to live in an atmosphere where principle is lax and practice loose in the daily doings of human life.

We may be called pious people, but that will only be pernicious nonsense, unless we exercise a spirit of earnest Christian conscientiousness in all the dealings of common life. All forms of deceit and double-dealing are as destructive to ourselves as they are dangerous to others. Custom and convenience may endorse many dubious modes of action; but custom and convenience are not our gods: we serve the Lord Christ. Nothing undermines the moral health of the community, next to the indulgence of deceits, more than popular excuses for them. Let us beware of them, and let us remember that it is one of the greatest glories of the Christianity we profess that its ideal of virtue is so high—that, *whatever we do*, we are to do all to the glory of God. Christianity is the conservator of man's best interests, both for time and eternity. It preserves to us, amid all life's best successes, a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

I have not the slightest sympathy with the class of persons who are always bargain-hunting, and then complain of being victimised. This is only a new version of the biter bit. No one has much respect for them, and most certainly they have little for themselves. But shutting out of consideration all bargain-hunters, bargain-botherers (for there are those who *bother* people into bargains), and bargain-drivers, it is manifest that a large class of persons are daily victimised in our great cities.

What villainous places the mock-auction-rooms of London are! Just look inside at day time. The place is made dark and the gas is flaring, and some five or six hired officials begin to bid as you enter, and the cunning auctioneer at once scents a victim, and prepares the net for the bird. Look! they are putting up a silver watch, half lead, of course, and the rest bad brass. Up it goes; ten—fifteen—thirty shillings. It is knocked down. It sounds cheap; but it isn't worth five.

Who is it knocked down to, though? See, that youth fresh from the country. He looked in to see. What a muff, you say, to bid. Ay, but he didn't bid! The auctioneer says, "It belongs to that gent. I took your nod of the head, sir." "Yes; it's yours fair enough," say the hired attendant bidders. The youth blushes, stammers, protests, but it's all of little use, so he pays and quits with a heavy heart, for he meant to send his first few weeks' savings to his dear grey mother in the old country town. A moment or two elapses: they all drink some porter, sneer and snigger at the raw youth, then stand attention round the desk and wait. Therein enters next a youngish woman, the wife, may be, of some journeyman carpenter. She hears the bidding, asks bashfully and quietly of the fellow next her if all the plated teapots are sold—for, poor dear soul, she's saved some fifteen shillings, and wishes to surprise honest John with a "bright new beauty," like her sister Emma's, the engineer's wife, when he sits down to tea on Sunday next. "No, ma'am, they are just coming on," and he takes up a spurious catalogue, and winks at the auctioneer. Next lot: a splendid Sheffield teapot, durable and beautiful, made of the finest metal, thickly plated; cheap at three guineas to any purchaser. Up it goes; five—ten—fifteen. Yes, they know about *her* price. "Yes, ma'am—it's yours, ma'am." Poor soul! and when she shows it to the honest trader, near her own humble street, who teaches her children in the Sunday-school, he tells her plainly that it's all lead and tin, and not worth half-a-crown. It's sorrowful to see her tears, when she tells the story to her husband on Sabbath afternoon; but she does, and it's no light sorrow in that little frugal home. I say that such victimisers are amongst the worst and basest of men.

Fiction! you say. Not at all; facts far worse have come out in our courts concerning these dens of deceit. You are quite wrong, my critic, in thinking that I speak so strongly, having been done myself; for mock-auction-rooms stood in a category of dangerous places I was warned against when first I came to "London Town."

Now come out into the open day, and let us look at the brilliant shops. What a crowd here! chiefly women. Oh! it's a bonnet-shop. Well, to be honest, I have no sympathy with those who satirise what they call the love of dress in women. I suspect both sexes are pretty much on a par, in this respect at least. Nor have I any sympathy with those who think it stupid to care about personal appearance. I do not suppose that much sympathy is awakened by the bonnet victim. Amidst those dangling articles in the window there appear to be one or two special beauties; and so cheap! That lady is about to buy one

ticketed at fifteen shillings, which, she confidentially whispers to her friend, "*Couldn't have been made for a guinea;*" and when it is sent home, if the real lace has been undone and common ditto put in its place; if the better flowers have given place to *worse* ones, I do not for a moment excuse the sellers, but I haven't so much as a pennyworth of sympathy with the buyer. She guessed it was a show bonnet, which it certainly was; and as she knew it must have cost more than the price asked, she meant—if you look at the philosophy of the matter—to get *something for nothing*, which is not the usual way of doing business, either in Paris or London. I believe it was true in the old school-birching days, that some unlucky lads did get something for nothing, in the shape of punishments without offence: but that, after all, is a different kind of thing.

Exquisite vases! those in the next shop. Just the thing for the drawing-room mantelpiece, and only eighteen shillings: just think. "Ah—hem—not the PAIR, ma'am; but eighteen shillings each, ma'am."

Society will have it so! says my critic; why complain about self-imposed difficulties? If the public will be eager after bargain-buying, then society must be done. This is not so. People will avoid seeking for things they cannot afford, and no one has a right to trick them into buying, at prices they can manage to compass, articles which are not good in themselves.

We will take our ticket now at the railway-station. And here, let me say, invariably count your change, and do not move it off the counter till you have. It strikes me there must be some amount of business done through occasional short change, given in the hurry-scurry of taking tickets. Yesterday I had six shillings given me instead of seven; but I was just in time to have it counted. The week before, however, I was done, which made me "cute" for future times, as I pondered how possibly it had been done à la mode. Not long ago, a gentleman on reaching home found his pockets very heavy, and discovered three empty purses in them! Some rogue had gorged the contents, and stuffed the empty cases into his pockets. He would have been *victimised with a vengeance*, if a gentleman in blue had led him from the crowd to the station, and another gentleman in blue supported the evidence, and a third gentleman in blue attested that he tried to get away.

By-the-by, what a fearful view this gives us of the hateful influence of sin. It is difficult to conceive the human heart so hardened that it is altogether careless about unjust blame and serious punishment falling upon another. Some persons talk of sin as mere ignorance. Can anything better prove the deep depravity of which man's nature is capable than such actions as

these, where the innocent are left to suffer, while the guilty go on their way to scenes of selfish indulgence and sin, callous concerning those they have cruelly and carelessly wronged in reputation for the whole of life? How shortsighted and superficial those critics of theology are, who question the fact that the unregenerate heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!

I would not write a paper without a serious side to it, because I believe that all subjects have serious sides, and this amongst them. Who does not remember that there are advertisements in our daily papers which victimise hundreds and thousands—literally tricking them into applications, which defraud them of their time, of their money, and not seldom of their peace of mind! It would be interesting to hear some of the questions put to applicants who have paid their fee, and who are to be passed on after a few pert questions. I cannot help thinking of a scene in the "Vicar of Wakefield."—"But are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business?"—"No!"—"Then you won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys' hair?"—"No."—"Then you won't do for a school. Have you had the small-pox?"—"No."—"Then you won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a bed?"—"No."—"Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach?"—"Yes."—"Then you will by no means do for a school."

But of all aspects of being victimised, there is none so serious as that which relates specially to the soul. We remember that there is no trickster like the devil, who promises, but never pays; whose design it is to deceive; who clothes himself as an angel of light, to lead his victims to the halls of death! We remember one who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and many of us, as we read the story in childhood, have mourned over the wrong. Let us take care that we do not play the spendthrift with moral health and peace; and that we do not mortgage eternity, for the sake of enjoying time. No victim can be more pitiable than he who sinks his high-born nature in the dust, who is chained at the chariot-wheels of sin, and who, after a lifetime in the service of a cruel master, hears at last only the hollow laughter which heralds a victim's doom. What to that was the uplifting of the wretched prophet's veil before the trembling woman, this discovery at last, that we have lost the soul's future for evermore? It is a bright relief to all such considerations to think of Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, and who has added to all earthly blessings, in the world to come life everlasting.

Surely, we are none of us so purblind as not to see that the Gospel of Jesus Christ furnishes the



only guarantee for a true and honest life. All other moralities are conventional; this, and this alone, is founded on the sure basis of the Divine and eternal will. Men may criticise and carp at Christianity as much as they please; they cannot injure it—it is too strong for that: and they themselves know that it gives the greatest security for the life that now is as well as for that which is to come. I remember reading, some months ago, of a traveller in the Australian wilds, who had about his person considerable wealth. Far from cities or villages, he espied at eventide a light in the thicket. He drew near to the little window through which it flickered, and found himself at a rough wilderness home. He tapped at the door, tied up his horse, and gained admittance. They were a rough-looking pair enough who dwelt there, and not at all calculated by their manner to inspire security. However, they hospitably gave the traveller refreshment, of which he eat sparingly, and they

warmly pressed him to take shelter for the night. He decided to stay, but resolved not to take one wink of sleep, but to keep one hand on his pistol and the other on his gold. At length the hour of rest came. The traveller, who was a sceptic, was surprised to see an old book lifted down from the shelf, and the rough-looking host said, "Stranger, we always read our Bible, and have a word of prayer before we rest." What a strange and wondrous effect these words had on him! His dreads were over—his fears for life and safety were gone. He slept long, sweetly, and soundly; and from that hour remembered, in all his after-life, that the fact of their Bible-reading and prayer made him feel at once free from concern about his money, and full of peace at heart. What a teaching there is in that little event for us all, reminding us that if the Gospel were universally accepted, and truly acted out, the word "victimiser" would vanish from our speech for evermore!

## THE HALF-SISTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC.

### CHAPTER XVI.



WHEN the squire had closed the door and fastened it, to prevent any recurrence of the disgraceful scene which we were obliged to record in our last chapter, he turned to his wife. Her head had sunk upon the table, her hands were stretched out helplessly, as if mutely imploring for mercy. He spoke to her, but she answered not. Overcome by the shock, the grief, the despair, the lady of Cranstead Abbey had fainted.

He raised her in his arms, and carried her to the room adjoining. It was her dressing-room, and a fire was burning, and a sofa placed by it. He laid her on the sofa, and then rang the bell.

Until Martha came, he stood over her, chafing her hands, and doing all he could to promote her recovery. His face had no sternness, as one might suppose, from the occurrence which had transpired. Pure compassion, the tenderest sympathy for the woman so dear to him, was its prevailing expression.

When Martha came, he said, quietly, and sadly, "See, Martha, your mistress has fainted."

"I see, sir; let me come! Ah! poor thing!"

She stopped. The words had escaped her unawares. This woman had been Mrs. Cranstead's attendant ever since her marriage.

The squire, satisfied that all was about to be done that could be, and having heard the first sigh of returning consciousness, went back to the drawing-room. The fire had burnt low, but he did not heed it. He stood, leaning his elbow on the mantelpiece, as if lost in thought. A shade of melancholy, deeper

than one could have imagined, now clouded the features of the master of Cranstead. The tea-things had not been removed; but the urn had left off hissing, and the tea was cold. He took his cup from the stand, and drank off its contents. Then, after another lengthened pause, he quitted the room, and went down the broad oak stairs. He went down in search of his son.

The door, to the right hand, led into the dining-room. Here he guessed that Archibald might possibly be. He opened it, and walked in.

There was sufficient light from the chandelier overhead. He saw, by the empty plate and dish, and various other signs, that some one had been dining. There was a strong smell of spirits, which proceeded from a tumbler on the floor, its contents half spilt, as though it had fallen from an unsteady hand. Looking further, his pulses might well tingle with shame, and his heart throb with a father's most bitter grief.

The heir of the Cransteads lay stretched on the floor, sleeping the helpless sleep of intoxication.

The squire stood regarding him, with a face in which severity was blended with intolerable anguish. Then, as if unable to endure the spectacle another moment, he turned away.

The fire blazed brightly in the old-fashioned grate, and threw a ruddy light on the crest carved over it. It flashed cheerily, too, on the white damask cloth, and was reflected in the massive silver coffee-pot. Breakfast was laid in the room usually occupied by the squire and his lady during the early part of the day—the room in which Joyce Meridale had had his interview with the master of Cranstead.





(Drawn by ALFRED THOMPSON.)

"I a soldier's wife and mother,

You a gallant soldier's son."—p. 557.

Morning had dawned, not pleasantly, but with a cold wet fog, and a tendency to snow and sleet, a circumstance which mattered little to those ensconced in homes so full of temporal comfort as the abbey.

The squire's letters and papers had been just brought in, having been duly delivered at the postern-door mentioned in a previous chapter. Very soon afterwards, the squire himself, with his usual brisk tread, came in to breakfast.

Not often did his lady give him the solace of her company at his morning's repast. After the scene of last night, such an exception was hardly to be expected. In fact, Martha had passed him on the stairs, carrying her mistress a cup of tea to her in her room.

The squire sat down to table, attended by the faithful Jarvis. When all was ready, the old man, for he had grown grey in his master's service, ere he retired, put a chair in the place sometimes occupied by Archibald.

Sometimes, for non-attendance at meals—a total disregard to the rules and habits of the household—was one of the young man's characteristics.

The squire noted the act, and his face assumed an expression of severity unusual to it. Archibald, then, intended to breakfast with him.

"I wonder he is not ashamed to look me in the face," thought the squire.

But Archibald Cranstead knew no shame.

Presently, the swaggering step—there was no other like it in the house—was heard outside the door. The squire opened his paper, and began to read it, as if to preclude the possibility of conversation. Yet he intended to make some stringent remarks, too, ere the young man left the room.

Archibald came in with his usual air of dogged indifference—a deportment he was wont to assume after an outbreak such as we have narrated. He was not remarkable for courtesy at any time, and he sat down without speaking. But the squire was punctilious under all circumstances, and was never known to omit a civility.

"Good morning, Archibald."

And a keen, somewhat indignant eye flashed from behind the daily paper.

"Good morning, father."

This was said sullenly, and as if forced from him against his will.

No other conversation was attempted. Archibald carried his plate to the side-table, and helped himself plentifully from the substantial viands that flanked it. Then he ate his breakfast, sitting opposite his father in the chair placed by Jarvis.

The squire scarcely touched meat or drink. He had but a sorry appetite that morning. His manner was that of a parent who has been outraged.

At length the gloomy unsocial meal was over, and the breakfast-things removed. Archibald's boots had been brought in, and, throwing off his slippers, he began to draw them on. He would most likely go out, and be no more seen or heard of till night, perhaps not then.

But this the squire did not intend. Laying down the paper, he said, coldly, yet with great decision, "Archibald, I wish a few words with you ere you go."

Archibald had now drawn on his boots, and was stamping his feet on the hearthrug.

"Say on, father."

His tone had more than a touch of insolence in it.

"I wish to ask you if the conduct of last night is to be repeated?"

Archibald made no reply. He was still looking down at his boots.

"If our home is to be outraged, our domestics insulted, our happiness destroyed," continued the squire, speaking with sternness, "then it is time some other plan was thought of. Beyond a certain point, forbearance becomes weakness."

Archibald's face underwent a slight change as his father spoke. The air of bravado and sullen indifference changed to one of some anxiety. He glanced up at the countenance of the squire and then looked down again. That face seemed set against him like a flint.

"Your mother's health, her very life," resumed the squire, his sternness increasing, "is being sacrificed to your brutality. Yes, Archibald, the word is none too strong, after what passed yesterday. You are yet a minor, and under my control. I shall take steps for sending you abroad."

The expression of alarm deepened in the young man's face. Joined to it was another expression still, which it was difficult to decipher.

"I did not mean to frighten my mother, said he, hastily. "I hardly knew what I was about. I did not think she would have minded me."

"Mind you, boy!" exclaimed the squire, with a burst of feeling he was unable to suppress. "Don't you see that you are breaking her heart and mine?"

Archibald did not answer all at once. He seemed uneasy and alarmed. The squire began to fancy he had made some impression.

"Your mother is ill, Archibald. She fainted last night, and this morning, she cannot leave her room. This is your doing."

"I am sure I am sorry. I don't want to leave home, father," replied Archibald, in a tone of increasing anxiety.

"Then you must promise better conduct for the future. You must conform to the rules of the house, and spend your nights at home. Above all, you must apologise to your mother."

A dark sullen look came like a cloud over the features of Archibald. Then he said, reluctantly, "I don't mind! I will apologise, if I may be let alone."

The squire turned from him, with a sigh. Yet this was a concession never before wrung from the unwilling spirit of Archibald.

Mrs. Cranstead was in her room leaning back in the easy chair before the fire. She had on a loose morning wrapper, and her snow-white locks, still thick and luxuriant, fell over her shoulders. Her husband came up to her, and took her cold white hand in his.

"Are you better Florence?"

"Better of the faintness, Vincent; but——" and she gave a quick gasp of pain.

"I have been talking to the boy, Florence. He is sorry he behaved so ill."

"Sorry! does he say he is sorry?" said she, a gleam of pleasure lighting her wan face.

"Indeed he does. He has never said so much before."

"Oh never!—never!"

"He wishes to apologise for his conduct, if you are able to see him," continued the squire, tenderly.

"Able! oh, let him come—let him come!" cried she, quickly, the mother's love, trampled and trodden down though it were, beaming from her eye. "Where is he, Vincent?"

"Do not agitate yourself, my love! He shall come—he shall come."

She pressed her hand to her heart, this proud, reserved lady of Cranstead. How could the world, which saw only her languid airs, her cold indifference, guess what was passing there? No poor heart in all the county was racked with pain as hers was.

Archibald was waiting in the drawing-room. As he stood looking into the splendid pier-glass, his face wore a look of self-congratulation. "The sooner this bother of a thing is over the better," muttered he; "it would never do just now——"

He had not time to finish the sentence. His father had opened the door, and was beckoning him to come.

The pale face of the lady of Cranstead was lighted up with a ray of hope, and of affection. She had opened her arms to receive him. She had forgiven him long before he asked. For he was her son—her only child; all she had, despite his faults, to live for! Willingly would she have embraced him. But he made no response. He stood unwillingly, ungraciously, by her side.

He told her he was sorry. He said a few words—but they came not from his heart. They fell far below what *her* yearning wounded heart demanded. And, again, that heart was forced to fall back upon itself. Struggles as it might, it could find no hold to cling to in him.

"But," as Archibald observed to himself, as he swaggered away from his mother's presence, "the bother of a thing is over now, thank goodness! and I can go and hear the Spanish girl sing to-night at the Trentham's."

#### CHAPTER XVII.

"Do I look well, papa? Hold the candle, Helen, for papa to see."

The invalid was sitting in an easy chair, muffled up in blankets. His face was more wan and pinched than when we saw him last, but yet it was lighted up by a smile of pleasure. His eyes, full of admiration, were fixed on Dolores.

She had re-modelled the pink dress with a skill and taste that the most fashionable modiste might have envied. She had made a little skirt, and looped

it up with bows of ribbon and artificial flowers. Underneath the skirt was a slip of India muslin, richly embroidered, from which peeped her tiny shoes of white satin. The bodice was laced in the Swiss fashion, and she wore a broad sash of black velvet. Her arms glittered with bracelets of gold, and a circlet of gold adorned her hair, which, in three massy curls, flowed to her waist. A fan hung from her wrist, a Spanish fan, in the use of which Dolores was an adept.

So radiant she looked, so flushed, so sparkling, that the very chamber, sombre and lonesome as it was, appeared lighted up with her presence.

"Do I look well, papa? And I did it all myself! I have worked my finger to the bone. Helen would not help me a stitch!"

"Helen had plenty else to do," said Joyce, gravely.

He and Helen were part of the conclave.

"Come here, Dolores," said Mr. Percival, fondly.

"I want to convince myself that you are real, and not a sylph or a fairy."

With her usual quick, flashing, movement, she darted to his side. Still looking at her curiously and admiringly, he felt of the wonderful pink dress, the bracelets, the fan, and then touched her rich glossy hair. Next he took her hands in his—tiny hands they were, but nimble and agile, when she chose it, as hands could be; and, drawing her down to him, said, "Kiss me, my darling! You are very beautiful!"

"To be sure I am, papa," said Dolores, lightly; "and now, hark! there's the cab. Almeria said it should be here by eight. I wish they kept their own carriage; I don't like going in a cab."

"You must not keep it waiting," said Helen, "as Miss Trentham is so good——"

"Nonsense, Helen! It's not good at all. She knew I would not go unless I was sent for."

"You must wrap her up, Helen," said Mr. Percival, anxiously. "What has she got on her feet?"

"Oh, nothing at all, papa, but my slippers. I don't want anything. I shall just put my mantilla over my head, and Joyce will carry me over the puddles," said Dolores, turning to him with an air of command.

"I am sure I shall be very happy," returned Joyce, who regarded her more like an elf or sprite than anything mortal.

"Come, then, and don't ruffle my dress, or drop me in the mud. Good night, papa."

"Good night, my darling. Be sure you take care of her Joyce."

"There is no fear of that," said Joyce, good-humouredly.

The cab was waiting at the bottom of the garden. There was, we need hardly say, no carriage-drive to the abode of the Percivals. Arrived at the front door, Joyce took the brilliant little creature in his arms. She was so light he could hardly feel her weight. When he had put her in the cab, he stopped a moment, as if arranging her dress.

"Dolores," said he, gravely, "you must bid me good-bye. I am afraid I shall not see you again."



"Why not, pray? What are you going to do now, Joyce?" asked she, in the authoritative tone she was wont to use to her brother-in-law elect.

"I am going to London to-morrow to prepare for a voyage to India."

"India! how nice and warm! I wish I was going!" said Dolores, thoughtlessly.

"Dolores," said Joyce, still gravely—there was no making any impression on her—"Dolores, will you promise to be kind to Helen when I am gone?"

"Kind! I am always kind to Helen."

"But I want you to comfort her. She will be very lonely and very sad."

His voice broke down, his eyes filled with tears. Joyce Meridale was exceeding sore at heart that night.

The laughing face of Dolores, for one moment, looked serious. It seemed to flash into her mind, the meaning of sundry things that would have puzzled her, had her careless nature allowed her to take the trouble.

Helen's eyes had, more than once, been red and swollen as with weeping. Going into Helen's room, she had found a handkerchief wet with tears. Could it be that Joyce's ill-luck was driving him away?—that Helen and Joyce would be parted—they who had loved each other so long and so truly? She bent forward, and put her hand into that of Joyce.

"I am very sorry, Joyce. I am sure I will do my best. Poor Helen!"

Sweeter than music were these words to Joyce. He was about to add more entreaties, when she cried out, all the mischief and roguery coming to her face again, and all the pity dying out—

"There now! get away, you tiresome, unlucky Joyce, or the cab-horse will run over you. Good-bye."

A vision of two sparkling eyes, the waving of a handkerchief, a smile from lips young and fresh as an opening rosebud, and she was gone. When would it be that he should see her again?

For a moment, her face re-assumed that thoughtful expression, just, as looking out, she saw him stand gazing sadly after her. Then the expression passed, like a scudding cloud in summer, and out broke the sunshine. She amused herself first by laughing with secret glee at some idea that suggested itself, and which seemed to afford her vast delight. Then she began to hum a line or two of the song she intended to sing. I believe it was of her own composing, for every verse ended with the words: "Sunny, sunny Spain."

At length the town was reached, and the cab rattled up to the great house, which stood on the suburbs. A minute after, Dolores had alighted under the portico, with the quickness and airiness of a bird.

She was late, and that was what she liked. No impression would be made were she to enter an half-empty room. No, indeed! and again she laughed with secret glee, as she stood under the portico.

All the guests invited to Mrs. Trentham's evening party had, as Georgina observed, fortunately come. But the attentions of Almeria were devoted to Archibald Cranstead. He was the sole representative of his family on this occasion. The squire and his lady, despite the boasted relationship, rarely patronised the fêtes and festivals of the Trenthams.

But what mattered that, so long as Archibald was here? He was in his best dress, and his best humour. He had spruced himself up, and wore white gloves, and had a flower in his button-hole. His face, for once, looked animated, and less sullen than usual. In fact, he appeared in a state of excitement that was quite alien to his nature.

Almeria thought he was about to make her an offer of marriage. She, too, had on her holiday face—her company manners.

It would be wise not to follow Miss Almeria Trentham behind the scenes.

"I am so glad you are come! and now we can have such a delightful evening," said she, as he placed himself behind her chair. "Won't you sit down? See, there is plenty of room."

"No, thank you; I would rather stand. I want to watch the people come in."

"They have all come now, except the singing girl. She is late, it seems."

"Who do you call the singing girl?" asked Archibald, with a touch of fierceness in his tone that startled her.

She turned round to look at him. His eyes, with more interest than they usually expressed, were fixed on the door.

"I mean, of course, Dolores Percival; who else should I mean?"

She spoke pettishly. His manner vexed her; and, despite her self-assurance, the words would come unpleasantly to her mind:

"She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw in my life!"

Suppose, for once, she had made a mistake? But, no; it was not likely. "Her sister, who does plain sewing," would settle that business!

"She is late!" muttered Almeria. "What business has she to be late?"


"Hush, hush! Look, she is come!"

The words proceeded from Archibald Cranstead, but were not spoken in his usual tone.

Oh, no! nothing was as it used to be, with him, to-night.

(To be continued.)

WAITING.

 WAS a year ago they took him,  
And it seems the other day  
That I flung my arms about him  
When they summoned him away;  
Then I heard the drums were beating,  
And I knew that we must part,  
And the cruel troops' retreating  
Stole the sunlight from my heart.

You were sleeping on your pillow,  
And he kissed you as you slept,  
And the blessing that he left you  
Was the sorrow that he wept;  
Loud above the shouts and tramping  
Was the wail of women borne  
For their fathers and their brothers  
At the breaking of the morn.

Of at night I hear him whisper,  
As I'm dreaming in my bed;  
Then I know your father's praying  
Midst the dying and the dead;  
Praying ever for his darlings  
Calmly sleeping far away,  
With his eyes upon the heavens  
Till the breaking of the day.

Through the cruel nights of winter,  
Through the summer days of sun—  
From the cheerless chill of daybreak  
Till the weary day is done,  
Faithful watch for ever keeping,  
Soldiers whisper 'neath their breath,  
Sitting sadly in the trenches,  
By the iron gate of death.


We must cling, my boy, together,  
For the time we're left alone,  
You for me, and I for you, love,  
Left to love and not to moan.  
We must fight with grief, nor falter,  
Till its weary course is run;  
I a soldier's wife and mother,  
You a gallant soldier's son.

For the ringing cheers we'll listen,  
When the happy time has come,  
When the eyes of women glisten  
At the brave men marching home.  
In the happy summer weather,  
When they tramp along the street,  
Hearts will sing and cling together,  
When the men and women meet.

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

"LET IT GO!"

A STORY FOR GIRLS.

OSE SOMERS was a girl whom everybody liked, and who seemed to like everybody. In Mrs. Anderson's "Yeung Ladies' Seminary" there were richer, handsomer, wittier girls than she; but still Rose was the universal favourite. Should you like to know why, you have only to accompany me into the schoolroom lobby, and listen to Fanny West and Lucy Edwards, as they are standing before the glass-door looking into the playground, their arms round each other's waists.

"Well, Fanny, I can't tell how it is, but Rose always seems on good terms with every one."

"Indeed she does; and it seems quite natural to her to be so. I can't think she ever knew she had done an act of kindness in her life."

"I hope she will soon be able to be among us again, for the school seems quite dull without her. Have you heard how she is this morning?"

"Yes; the nurse told me that she is fast recovering, and hopes to be out of her room in two or three days."

"Ah! here comes Ellen. How nice she looks!"

Ellen Graves was an only daughter of very wealthy parents. She knew she was rich, and took pains to make all her fellow-pupils know it too; but, unlike girls of the favoured class to which she belonged, she was not indolent. She was too ambitious and

aspiring for that. All her desire was to get the first place in her class, and to be thought clever.

She and Rose Somers were generally considered to be the quickest and most advanced pupils in school. Both were striving hard to get the first prize, when the school should break up for the Christmas holidays, and were therefore regarded by most of the girls as rivals.

Ellen approached Fanny and Lucy with an assuming air of superiority, and showing off her rich silk dress and glittering jewellery to the greatest advantage. Then, bowing gracefully, she said, "Good morning, girls. Have you heard that a beautiful stranger has just arrived among us?"

"No, that we haven't; pray, who is it?"

"A tawny mulatto from the West Indies, with hair and features like a negress. I believe her father was an Englishman, for her surname is Easton; but her mother must have been an African."

"You don't say so! We should like to know who will keep company with her."

"So should I; but I know very well who won't!" and saying this, Ellen marched away, with a dignified toss of the head and a curl of disdain on her lip.

Poor Margaret Easton, the new-comer, was told by Mrs. Anderson, who kept the establishment, that she would probably meet with cool treatment from her other pupils at first; and she advised her to try to win their friendship by kindness and good humour.

When, therefore, at the breakfast-table, next morning, she found herself kept at the greatest possible distance by all the rest of the girls, she was not surprised. No one sat near her, and no one spoke to her, except her kind and sympathising governess, who, from the most disinterested and generous motives, had received her as a pupil.

When the school-bell rang, she was left to go quite alone to her desk, and after she was seated there, she could not help observing that all eyes were watching her; but not one glance of kindness or sympathy was turned upon her. Prepared, as she thought she was, to submit to all this ill-treatment, she found it very hard to bear up against it. Sometimes, when she happened to raise her eyes from the book or slate which was before her, and encountered their derisive looks, her heart almost failed her, and she could hardly retain her self-possession.

When morning lessons were over, the girls went out for their accustomed walk before dinner.

As no one would walk with poor Margaret, she was obliged, unlike all the others, who walked in pairs, to follow in the rear by herself. But this was not the only annoyance she had to bear. Often did she overhear whispered remarks, which those who thoughtlessly uttered them perhaps never intended for her ear; such as: "Did you ever see such an ugly face? What a flat nose! And such thick red lips! I'm sorry for her; I wouldn't be like her for all the world!"

Could they have known what cruel torture their words were inflicting upon poor Margaret's nerves, they would have been quite vexed, if not ashamed of themselves.

But they had no idea that they were acting unkindly. If, however, they had closely watched the poor girl's face, they might often have seen the tears coursing down her cheeks.

How she longed for the time when she might seek some place of retirement, where to give vent to her pent-up grief in prayers and tears! Happily for her, she knew there was one Friend who was no respecter of persons, and into whose ear she could pour all her complaints and find ease and comfort.

Margaret spent the remainder of this, the saddest day of all she ever remembered, in perpetual vexation and sorrow. But several days besides of like experience followed; and her spirits were well-nigh broken by the unceasing mortifications which she had daily endured.

One morning, Margaret was pensively walking to and fro on the lawn in front of the schoolhouse, waiting the arrival of the postman with a letter, which she was anxiously expecting from her dear father in Jamaica, when some one from the house came behind her, and, gently tapping her on the shoulder, accosted her in a friendly tone, saying, "How is Miss Easton?" and at the same time, she held out her hand in the most cordial manner.

Before Margaret had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment to return this kind salutation, Rose Somers announced her name to her; and said,

"I am so glad to make your acquaintance; especially since I have heard from dear Mrs. Anderson that you have felt yourself so lonely since you have been here."

Margaret's eyes filled with tears, as she replied, with deep emotion, "Is it true, that I have at last found a friend here who will condescend to notice me? Oh! how thankful I am to you, and to our kind governess, for this."

As they were talking together, the two girls, Fanny West and Lucy Edwards, caught sight of them from the library window.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Lucy, watching the pair as they were walking down the path towards the entrance-gate. "Just look there, now! I can scarcely believe my eyes!—but isn't that Rose Somers walking and chatting quite familiarly with the mulatto girl?"

"Certainly, it can be no other," responded Fanny, in a bewildered tone.

Both girls then ran up-stairs to inform Miss Graves, who was not yet out of her dressing-room, of what they had just seen.

Ellen went near the window, which opened on the front side of the house, and, true enough, she saw them both. "All the better for me," she thought. "Let Rose degrade herself in that way as much as she likes; but she will soon have to pay dearly for it, that's all."

All day, Fanny and Lucy sought the first opportunity of speaking with Rose about the singular and unfortunate choice of a new companion which they considered she had made that morning. But Rose, who had just made her first appearance in school since her recent illness, was so surrounded with her numerous companions, who were all so very glad to see her again, that they had to wait till late in the afternoon before they could find her alone for a few minutes. Then, taking her aside to a seat in the conservatory, the three girls sat down together, all alone.

Fanny began the conversation.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, dear Rose, that you should have let yourself be seen walking with that frightful creole this morning. You surely were not aware how many eyes were looking wonderingly at you."

"No, indeed; I neither thought nor cared at all about it. I hope the sight gratified them."

Lucy said, "I don't know whether any one was foolish enough to enjoy such a scene; one thing I know, that no real friend of yours could be at all pleased at it. You don't know how all the girls dislike Margaret—and can't help showing it, either, as you may have already seen—and they will soon begin to think, if you associate yourself with her, that you are not any better than she is."

"Who says I am any better? I don't believe I am at all better than Margaret."

"Whatever are you thinking about?" interrupted Fanny. "Your illness, I fear, must have impaired your intellect, or you would not talk in that strange way about yourself. For my part, I think I'm as



much better than she, or any other mulatto like her, as a rose is better than a thistle."

"Since you don't seem to understand me, let me explain to you why I like Margaret. I find her to be a nice, pleasant, thoughtful girl, whose sincerity of heart and fine intellect make her more worthy of my friendship than I, or any of us, can be of hers."

"But what do you think will become of your character and position among the girls? Should you lose your popularity, which you have been so successful in gaining, what then?"

"Then let it go, and I don't care how soon!"

The noble decision and emphasis with which these words were uttered struck both girls with admiration, and they afterwards said, "She is certainly such a heroine as we never thought her before; she spoke bravely, if not wisely."

When at last the long-looked-for day came for the half-year's examination of the pupils and the distribution of the prizes, they were all assembled in the schoolroom. Mrs. Anderson and several lady visitors, among whom were some of the parents and friends of the pupils, took their places on a platform raised for the occasion.

Mrs. Anderson then rose, and came forward with a list in her hand, containing the names of the successful pupils, and immediately all eyes were eagerly turned towards her in breathless expectation, to hear who was the fortunate individual that should receive the first prize, which they knew would be a very honourable and handsome one indeed. Ellen Graves prepared herself for the announcement, which she felt very surely would be that of her own name. But after Mrs. Anderson had addressed a few words of commendation to the first class in general, she turned to the list and read: "The first prize has been awarded with great satisfaction to Miss Rose Somers, whose exemplary conduct and superior merit have rendered her fully entitled to receive it." On hearing this, Ellen was keenly mortified, and bit her lip with

vexation; but, mustering up her courage to bear the indignity of hearing her own name given out next, she listened while Mrs. Anderson read again: "The second prize is justly due to Miss Margaret Easton, as being next in general average as regards scholarship, and equal to the first in arithmetic and deportment." All the girls in the class looked at each other in utter amazement.

Ellen was astounded: she now turned pale with indignation, and sat stiff and motionless, as if she had been paralysed; but as soon as the list was finished, she hurried up-stairs to her own room, where she shut herself up, and was not seen again that day. Next morning, when the school was to break up, all the girls were present except Ellen, who was understood to be unwell.

The girls afterwards separated; but some of them were heard one day to remark, that the scene which they had witnessed, at their last examination, had made such a strong impression on their minds, that they became convinced of the folly and wickedness of the too common prejudice against people of a colour and clime different to their own.

#### ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC ON PAGE 528.

"Moses."—Exod. iv. 10, 11.

1. M aneah ..... Judg. xiii. 1.
2. O rion ..... Job xxxviii. 31.
3. S hangar ..... Judg. iii. 31.
4. E liphas ..... Job ii. 11.
5. S hemer ..... 1 Kings xvi. 24.

#### SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.

A KING WHO WAS SLAIN BY ONE OF HIS OFFICERS.

1. The mother of one who had known the Scriptures from his youth.
2. A physician.
3. A figurative name for Jerusalem.
5. A city to which the Jewish captives were transported.

### MR. STOUGHTON'S HISTORY.\*

**E**CCLESIASTICAL history is generally associated, in the popular mind, with a dry, lifeless record of the views of various ancient Fathers, and an elaborate summary of the heresies of the early centuries of the Church's existence. Nothing could be more erroneous, however, than to suppose that the two volumes which Mr. Stoughton has called his "Ecclesiastical History of England" is such a work as we have alluded to. It is a history of the Church in England during the most interesting period of our country's career. It was during the Civil War and the Commonwealth that religious parties in England, as they now exist, were, if not first engendered, at all events moulded into tangible

realities; and it is the history of this process which Mr. Stoughton has recorded with much lucidity, with great eloquence, with graphic descriptive power, and—notwithstanding the fact that he is the minister of one of the religious parties which have come down from the period—with a very large amount of impartiality. We cannot speak too highly of the pains and diligence which the author has bestowed upon the collation of his facts, and of the graphic manner in which he describes the great incidents of the period. The following account of the retirement of the king to Oxford will serve as a fair sample of the author's descriptive powers:—

"Charles went to Oxford after the battle of Edgehill, and there, during the civil wars, set up his head-quarters. Occasionally, he was absent

\* "Ecclesiastical History of England." By James Stoughton. In Two Vols. London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

with the army, but that central city, which was so convenient for the purpose in many respects, he made his fortress and his home. It underwent great alterations. Fortifications were contrived by Richard Rallingson, who also drew 'a mathematical scheme or plot of the garrison,' and in an old print by Anthony Wood may be traced the zigzag lines of defence which were drawn on every side about the city. Gownsmen transformed themselves into cavaliers, and exchanged college caps for steel bonnets. Streets echoed with the tramp of war-horses and the clatter of iron-heeled boots. Wagons, guarded by pikemen, and laden with ammunition and stores, rolled through the picturesque gateways; and valiant and loyal subjects rallied round their sovereign in the hour of his need, ready to shed their last drop of blood beneath his standard. The colleges melted down their plate to supply military chests, and Magdalen especially stood true to the king's cause. Rupert took up his residence there, and the sound of his trumpets calling to horse disturbed the silence of the beautiful cloisters. Whilst most of the Fellows, being divines, could only help with their prayers and their purses, one of them, who was a doctor of civil law, raised a troop of undergraduates, and fell fighting in his Majesty's service. Amidst the excitement which followed the king's turn of fortune, he gathered together the relics of his court, and established in Christ Church Hall a mock parliament, which was intended to rival the real one at Westminster. Charles had grasped at absolute power; now nothing remained but the shadow of dominion. At Oxford he but played at kingship."

We can candidly recommend this work to all who care—and who is there who should not?—to be acquainted with the position of the Church of Christ in this country during one of the most brilliant and saddest periods in our history—when great men were greatly in earnest, and trod the political boards with passionate energy. We must, however, in candour, say that we do not endorse all the opinions Mr. Stoughton expresses in this book.

The following eloquent passage, which we give as a specimen of Mr. Stoughton's style, concludes the able and comprehensive work, which reflects high credit on the learned and eloquent author:—

"The ruler in mortal agony, by his faith and prayers, presents a luminous contrast to another death-scene at Whitehall, a few years afterwards, when a different spirit passed away amidst symbols of Popish superstition, the accessories of an abandoned court, and the memories of a sensual life. But, beyond that contrast, and apart from all circumstances of royal splendour; dis-

missing from our minds images of the quaint magnificence of the sick chamber in Whitehall, with its, perhaps, tapestried walls and bed of damask hangings, and the figures of generals, chaplains, and State servants clustering round the form wasted by disease, and the countenance growing pale in death; putting aside, also, the memory of the marvellous career of the departing soldier and statesman of the Commonwealth—we meet, in Cromwell's last words, with an expression of the inmost soul of many a Puritan in such dark nights, doing battle with the last enemy. Nor, perhaps, in the sorrows of his beloved family, and the sympathies of brother generals, and the intercessions of attached chaplains, was there more of religious affection than gathered about other pilgrims of that era, whilst at last they were laying down all life's heavy burdens, at once and for ever. Such sentiments were often heard, such consolations were often imparted, and such prayers, whatever of infirmity there might be clinging to them, often went up to the Throne of Grace; but on account of Oliver's high position, and the vast interests which depended on his life, there would be, in his case, additional grounds for earnestness and the inspiration of a much wider sympathy."

"Thurloe wrote to the Protector's son, Henry, when all was over, 'that never was there any man so prayed for as he was during sickness; solemn assemblies meeting every day to beseech the Lord for the continuance of his life, so that he is gone to heaven embalmed with the tears of his people, and upon the wings of the prayers of the saint.' And in these impassioned supplications we can see, even now, the reflection of a devout temper then very common; and in the parish congregations, and the church gatherings of that day, may be recognised the interest felt in the life of one who was the pillar of their strength and the shield of their freedom."

MR. MATTHIAS BARR, whose name is not altogether unknown in these pages, has collected into a cheap little book\* the most popular of his poems on children. Now-a-days, verse is so abundant and so mediocre, that it is sometimes difficult indeed to decide which is poetry and which postastery. But on reading many of these little poems, there is no room to doubt Mr. Barr's claims to be considered a poet. We would especially direct the reader's attention to a charming little poem, called "Only a Little Glove" in justification of our verdict.

\* "Little Willie, and other Poems on Children." By Matthias Barr. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.